



PART B:	RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL
REPORT TO:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 MAY 2021
REPORT OF THE:	PROGRAMME DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS AND PARTNERSHIPS PHILLIP SPURR
TITLE OF REPORT:	DRAFT RYEDALE HOUSING STRATEGY 2021-2024
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval of the draft Housing Strategy objectives 2021-24 .

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) the objectives and priorities be endorsed by Policy and Resources Committee and presented to Council

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The objectives and proposals within the Housing Strategy, together with their timetable for implementation, address the priority housing issues within Ryedale.

3.2 The previous Housing Strategy expired in April 2021 and the Council needs to ensure plans are in place for the next 3 years to inform service provision.

3.3 Consultation has taken place through a survey with the community, stakeholders and members. This has enabled the Council to develop priorities to take forward over the next 3 years. The Strategy provides an effective programme of specific proposals to be undertaken and allows for the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Strategy in meeting housing needs.

3.4 In addition, across North Yorkshire and York, work is nearing completion on reviewing the overarching strategic housing direction and the local objectives are to align with the actions identified across the sub region. This has not be completed to date and therefore is not included at this time. They have however agreed overarching aims which are highlighted later in the report.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 The objectives identified provide the appropriate steps to address housing needs within Ryedale.
- 4.2 The Strategy would normally be for a 5 year period, however due to potential Local Government Reorganisation it was agreed across the sub region that strategic housing direction would be agreed initially for a shorter period. In Ryedale this was agreed for the next 3 years, which will take the authority to March 2024.
- 4.3 Local Government Review
- 4.4 In July it is anticipated that government will announce a decision on which proposal (if any) they wish to implement, and will start to put the relevant legislation in place for the unitaries to be formed.
- 4.5 There is a possible "go live" date of April 2023. Shadow authorities could come into being in 2022, and the actual unitaries could be in place in April 2023. It is anticipated that elections in 2022 could be into the shadow/continuing authority, so that those elected have a mandate to establish the new authority(s), set a budget and make senior appointments.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The objectives developed support the Council's plan around
- Our communities
 - Our economy
- 5.2 Our Communities - strong, inclusive and attractive
- Help for those in need
- 5.3 Our Economy - Harnessing Ryedale's unique economy to deliver growth, homes and jobs
- Quality homes local people can afford
- 5.4 Consultation on key priorities in the strategy has been undertaken. There were 56 responses to the consultation. Amendments have been made in response to this consultation and the main areas people wanted addressing that was highlighted within the consultation feedback included:
- Housing for the elderly
 - Housing for younger people
 - Perceived infrastructure issues with new developments (ie. places at schools, doctors and dentists and increased traffic)
 - Environmental issues

Out of all participants that took part in the consultation 85% felt that as a whole, the objectives in the Housing Strategy were correct

Comments made about the Strategy as a whole included;

- The Housing Strategy is what is needed for a fast growing town as growth is inevitable, but needs to be done right.
- It provides for renters and home owners, as well as across all age ranges.
- It is a good start but could go further.
- More housing is needed to help the minority of elderly, disabled and vulnerable and there is not enough choice for modern easy living.
- The objectives are well balanced and all areas of concern are addressed.
- Varying needs of the population have been recognised and provided for.

Comments in relation to improvements regarding the draft objectives from the remaining 15% included;

- Comments proposed that we need to ensure environmental issues are covered e.g. high levels of insulation, triple glazing, solar panels and heat pumps (either ground source or air source). These comments included new build properties as well as older properties.
- Numerous comments highlighted how there is a lack of bungalows being built and that we need to ensure bungalows are being delivered for the elderly in order to avoid assisted living and free up larger houses for younger people to buy.
- Some stated there should be more encouragement to use brownfield sites for new developments to make better use of the land, avoiding greenfield land.
- Affordable and social rent should be prioritised in the smaller settlements rather than just in the busier towns and the need for smaller developments based on local need and for people with a local connection to allow places to retain their character.

5.5 In response to the consultation feedback and the strategic aims developed by the sub region Ryedale has developed five draft housing objectives for the next 3 years as set out in sections 6.8.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 The new strategy replaces the previous strategy developed in 2015, which has continued to be reviewed on an annual basis. Progress has been made over the past 5 years and Ryedale aims to continue to improve the services offered in housing to the community.
- 6.2 The purpose of developing a strategy is to provide a framework for meeting the housing and housing related needs of the District over the next 3 years.
- 6.3 As well as reviewing Ryedale's Housing Strategy objectives, a sub-regional review has been undertaken and officers have ensured that the local proposals align with the overarching York, North Yorkshire and East Riding strategy highlighted at 6.5. This ensures consistency across the area, but also allow Ryedale to localise the issues that matter to our communities.
- 6.4 In looking at the objectives over the next 3 years it is important to recognise the progress that has been made through the existing Housing Strategy, . Further details are highlighted at Appendix 1.

6.5 York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Strategy Review 2021

The high level Housing Strategy review updates the strategic priorities for York, North Yorkshire and East Riding for the period 2021 to 2023. During this period the two-tier system of local government currently in operation across North Yorkshire is likely to be replaced by a unitary system. In recognition of the crucial role that housing plays in promoting improved health and wellbeing, and as a driver of economic growth, the review summarises the key housing priorities which have been identified as follows:.

York, North Yorkshire and East Riding strategic housing priorities;

- Maintain current levels of housing supply whilst increasing the quality of new homes
- Increase the supply of affordable housing
- Tackle homelessness
- Meet housing needs, including those of vulnerable households
- Ensure that people have a decent home to live in

6.6 The sub regional partnership remains committed to its vision of “enabling more new homes, and for all housing to be of a quality, type and size that meets the needs of our urban, rural and coastal communities and supports economic growth”.

6.7 Officers are still working with partners to fully understand the extent of the impact of the pandemic on housing, such as how it affect rent arrears, business plans and investment capacity. The impact on the supply of new homes is unclear at this stage. What is evident is that the pandemic has highlighted the long term issue of entrenched deprivation across parts of the sub regional area, the historic erosion of support infrastructure and the lack of supported housing at the scale necessary to respond to need and demand. House prices have increased across much of the area, exacerbating affordability challenges. Working with partners to address these issues is essential.

6.8 Ryedale Housing Strategy 2021/24

Following the consultation and the priorities agreed at the sub region, Ryedale has developed five key Objectives:

- **Ensure a suitable supply of housing**
- **Increase the supply of affordable housing**
- **Prevent homelessness**
- **Meet housing needs including those of vulnerable people**
- **Improve the quality and standard of homes**

Key priorities have been identified to deliver each of these five Objectives, as follows:

6.9 **Objective One- Ensure a suitable supply of housing** **Priorities**

- *Support the provision of homes for the elderly by ensuring a percentage of bungalows are developed on larger sites*
- *Ensure there is a supply of shared housing for young people on low incomes*
- *Bring empty properties back into use*
- *Review the Strategic Housing Market Assessment to establish the housing needs of the district*

- *Work to complete the Local Plan review and the implementation of the new Local Plan*

- 6.10 At a time when the Government is consulting on major reforms to the Planning System, there is great uncertainty about how these will impact locally on housing delivery. Over recent years Ryedale has performed strongly in terms of both granting planning permissions and delivering housing completions. This is a sustained level of performance. Over the past five years we have achieved over the 200 target in the Local Plan for housing delivery per annum.
- 6.11 Since the development of the last Housing Strategy, house prices have continued to increase, an example table is provided below for comparison;

2013	Mean House Price (£)	Mean Private Rents/Month (£)	Mean Annual Earnings (£)	House Price to income Ratio (%)	Income needed for 80% mortgage (£)
Ryedale	217,858	562	23,124	9.4	49,796*
2020	Mean House Price (£)	Mean Private Rents/Month (£)	Mean Annual Earnings (£)	House Price to income Ratio (%)	Income needed for 80% mortgage (£)
Ryedale	321,576	600	23,721	13.5	78,643*

*Note- 20 year mortgage at 5% interest for illustration purposes only

- 6.12 The appeal of Ryedale means that there is not only a pressure in the housing market from residents and newly forming family households, but also from commuters, retirees and second home owners. These impact on housing availability, communities, land prices and affordability. The pandemic has shown Ryedale is a sought after destination for households, with a buoyant housing market within Ryedale. The mostly rural area has proved attractive to buyers searching for access to open space and larger properties with gardens from where they can work remotely.
- 6.13 The supply of new homes falls short of demand across North Yorkshire. However, in Ryedale housing delivery is meeting its targets and it is important that this continues and we maintain the supply and consistency deliver new housing.

Housing Delivery (Number of Units Per Annum)

15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
251	321	278	194	395	TBC

The lack of housing which households can afford, has been identified by the North Yorkshire Housing Board and LEP as a constraint on local and sub regional economic growth and on community prosperity.

6.14 **Objective Two - Increase the supply of affordable housing**

Priorities

- *Work to deliver a range of housing for low cost home ownership and affordable rent, in the right place, and of the best quality and design*
- *Support the development of affordable housing on Rural Housing schemes*

- *Better understand the types of Affordable Housing products needed to meet needs (eg Social Rent/Affordable Rent/Intermediate, such as shared ownership)*
 - *Work with partners to improve capacity to deliver affordable housing, including developing a housing compact with Registered Providers (RPs) across York and North Yorkshire*
- 6.15 Affordability remains key for our area. Proposals in the Planning White Paper to increase affordable housing thresholds, if enacted, could impact on our affordable housing supply pipeline because some of the affordable housing delivered across Ryedale comes from the smaller schemes.
- 6.16 The Housing service has worked in partnership and has delivered a consistent supply of affordable housing across our rural communities. Since 2015 401 affordable homes have been delivered in Ryedale. The target is 75 affordable homes an annual basis. We have delivered an average of 80 every year over the 5 years of the strategy.
- 6.17 We are committed to continuing to be part of the Rural Housing Network partnership approach embodied by our Rural Housing Enabler working with Parish Councils, rural communities and RPs to meet identified housing need in our rural areas.
- 6.18 The issues communities face are more acute in rural areas. Local wages are traditionally lower than in urban areas and property prices and rental levels are higher. The quality of life offered by our rural areas is a strong attractor for existing populations, in migrants, retirees and second/holiday home owners. The percentage of second homes in Ryedale is well above the national average. The Council and its partners will respond productively to this issue with the provision of more rural homes, and the inclusion of local needs criteria within S106's to ensure the homes are let to local people in perpetuity.
- 6.19 **Objective Three – Prevent Homelessness**
- Priorities
- *Implement and achieve the objectives of the five year Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2020/25*
 - *Continue to improve the housing options service, to ensure residents are given high quality advice at all times*
 - *Encourage residents to seek support as early as possible when they are in housing need*
 - *Ensure there is access to the Mortgage Rescue Schemes for owner occupiers*
 - *Increase the provision of much needed specialist emergency accommodation*
 - *Make the best use of the private sector to prevent homelessness*
 - *Review the Young People’s Pathway in partnership with NYCC*
- 6.20 Addressing the needs of homeless households and preventing homelessness remains a key priority within the District. We know that preventing homelessness is more cost effective than dealing with its consequences. Ryedale has developed its own Homelessness Strategy and the Council will continue to maximise the opportunities in terms of addressing homelessness and particularly homelessness prevention.
- 6.21 Records show, over the last 12 months, that the volume of households seeking assistance through Housing Options has increased by 50%. Whilst the majority of these households have had their housing problem resolved in some way and their

homelessness prevented, very many of these households have multiple problems and the work needed to resolve the issues has increased incrementally.

6.22 The Council's approach to tackling homelessness continues to be through the use of prevention initiatives. Spending relatively small amounts of money to help to prevent households from becoming homeless saves the funds which would otherwise be spent on the provision of expensive temporary accommodation. This approach is well embedded and continues to prove to be successful. The excellent services are being sustained in part due to the ongoing commitment of the Council to prioritise this work. Examples of homeless prevention work include;

- Bonds and Rent in advance to access private rented accommodation
- Sourcing charity payments to assist with rent arrears
- Independent debt advice through Ryedale Citizens Advice
- Negotiations with landlords
- Early referrals systems with Housing Associations and statutory agencies
- Mediation with families to prevent youth homelessness
- Discretionary Housing Payments to assist whilst alternative housing is found
- Rough Sleeper pathway to ensure targeted support
- Access to food and utility vouchers to ensure rent continues to be paid
- In house homeless prevention support services
- Raising the profile of the services and improved accessibility through partnership working
- Social media campaigns to enhance early approaches from those needing advice

6.23 Covid- 19 and Homelessness

The homelessness response to COVID-19 has seen action taken across Ryedale to get everyone into safe accommodation during the pandemic. At the same time, the economic impact of coronavirus is exerting sudden pressure on people already struggling by low wages and high rents.

Many homeless people may also be hidden from statistics and services as they are dealing with their situation informally. This means staying with family and friends, sofa surfing, living in unsuitable housing, this came to light during the initial Covid 19 Lockdown.

- Ryedale has seen a continued new flow of people experiencing homelessness since the start of the pandemic.
- During the first few months of the pandemic, the increase was driven by those already experiencing homelessness - people who sofa were surfing who became more visible as their living situations forced them to access help.
- The most significant intervention that governments across all three nations made was the instruction to bring 'Everyone In' or provide emergency accommodation for everyone rough sleeping, at risk of rough sleeping, or in accommodation where they could not self-isolate throughout the pandemic. This was an enormous undertaking for Ryedale and resulted the Council accommodating an additional 31 households. This intervention has clearly saved lives during the pandemic

- There is growing concern over funding to support a homelessness response in both the immediate and longer-term future.
- There was recognition of the positive effect policies have had on levels of homelessness during the pandemic, particularly the pause in evictions and temporary uplift in local housing allowance there is the concern about wider economic context and the cumulation of rent arrears in the area.

A challenge that the Council will face over the next 6 months will be the increase in service requirements as landlords and housing providers can now recover any debt and apply for evictions through the courts. In preparation for this, the team is working hard with partners to ensure residents engage with services as soon as possible and seek advice either directly from the housing service or through information provided regularly to partners.

6.24 **Objective Four- Meeting housing needs, including those of vulnerable people**

Priorities

- *Provide access to support which enables people to stay in their homes where possible*
- *Ensure affordable housing is allocated in the most effective ways to solve housing need*
- *Ensure that vulnerable and isolated residents have access to the Ryecare Lifeline Service*
- *Continue the partnership with Scarborough Borough Council through the delivery of the White Rose Home Improvement Agency*
- *Work to deliver more specialist housing*
- *Deliver housing suitable for those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health or suffering domestic violence*
- *Meet the needs of the Syrian Refugee programme in partnership across North Yorkshire*

6.25 A lack of suitable accommodation can significantly affect the support, care or treatment of a vulnerable person. Vulnerable people may need additional help and guidance in accessing housing options including through Choice Based Lettings. A number of vulnerable people have been identified through joint working groups as priorities for housing related support and services have been commissioned by NYCC to meet these needs. These include across Ryedale, services for those suffering from Domestic Abuse, young homeless people, child sexual exploitation, ex-offenders, people with mental health problems, and people with substance misuse issues. In addition, the Council also provides an in-house Homeless Support Service since October 2019 funded through NYCC.

6.26 Housing continues to work actively with partner agencies on their strategies focusing on the vulnerable client groups across the District.

6.27 The needs of those with learning difficulties are met through joint working with NYCC.

6.28 **Objective Five – Improving the quality and standard of homes**

Priorities

- *Continue to deliver investment in energy efficiency*
- *Implement a Design Guide for new housing across York and North Yorkshire*
- *Continue to access funding from the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to support these partnerships*
- *The Council will ensure the highest environmental standards on all Council developments/schemes, including completion of Carbon/Climate assessments*
- *Reduce the impact that poor housing has on health and wellbeing*
- *Work with private sector landlords and the local private rented sector to review the information available to landlords on property maintenance and good management*
- *Work with landlords to discover the barriers to accessing available funding opportunities to improve their rental properties to increase the EPC to meet Government targets.*
- *Continue to make best use of funding through Ryedale grants and loans to home owners to address disrepair*
- *Encourage the development of environmentally sustainable new build homes*
- *Develop a robust and rolling programme of Houses in Multiple Occupation inspection to ensure they meet the prescribed standards and have a valid licence*
- *Encourage joint working with other departments to improve the Green Economy*

6.29 The need to address housing safety standards post Grenfell needs no explanation. There is however recognition that the quality of homes is more than just housing standards. The 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' Commission by Government identifies the need to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods through developing new practical measures which can be used by the planning system. These sentiments are reflected in some of the proposals in the Planning White Paper, and it is within this context that work to develop a local Design Guide take on new significance locally. The draft Guide has been developed in consultation with planners and developers with a view to being rolled out across the area during 2021.

6.30 The Council needs to do what it can to improve the environment by cutting carbon emissions in homes, while keeping bills low. Using new technologies such as air source heat pumps and the latest generation of solar panels we will ensure Climate Change assessments are completed and improvements made where possible.

6.31 Innovative management to maintain and improve the quality of our stock in all tenures is fundamental to the delivery of our priorities. We need to make the best use of our existing stock and seek ways to use the private sector and owner occupied sectors to address local housing needs.

6.32 Poor housing conditions have a detrimental effect on health and social sector housing has improved. However, the condition of some private rented homes still falls behind. The quality of the home i.e. a warm, dry and secure home is associated with better

health. In addition to basic housing requirements other factors that help to improve well-being include the ability to have modifications for those with disabilities.

6.33 The Council will continue to make improvements to private sector stock through the provision of grants and loans and work in partnership with Scarborough Borough Council in the continuation of the White Rose Improvement Agency.

6.34 The Council has been very successful in the development of schemes to address fuel poverty across the District. During the past 5 years, the Council has taken part in roadshows to promote renewable energies, and has delivered new boilers, air source heat pumps, solar panels and cavity wall insulation.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial

There is currently provision within the revenue budget to implement these proposed actions which are solely based upon internal funding sources. Any changes to the revenue budget may have an effect on this. Some of the actions are dependent on external funding sources, notably the Homeless Prevention Grant, NYCC funding and MHCLG. The continuation of these could change at any time.

There are unallocated resources from the MHCLG Homeless Prevention grant over the past few years and additional funding of £85K allocated from government in 21/22. Following a review of the service and in order to prepare for an increase in demand due to the pandemic, additional staffing resources will be allocated into the service. As we increase the housing projects, more strain is being put on the Housing Options team in addition to the 50% increase over the past 12 months for housing advice/support services and this will be addressed through specific support services for vulnerable groups and an additional Housing Officer to undertake the day to day management of the housing schemes and the Houses in Multiple Occupation/Shared housing in order to release capacity for clients approaching the service for housing advice. This will be covered through current and additional government funding allocated for 21/22.

The provision of capital funding/borrowing for housing projects will need to return to Members for authorisation on a scheme-by-scheme basis. In addition if there are any financial implications for implementing the Action Plan that are beyond currently agreed budgets these will be brought back to Senior Officers and Members for authorisation.

b) Legal

There are no legal implications for the Council in that the proposals within the Strategy will be consistent with the Council's strategic responsibility for the provision of housing services.

c) Climate Change

Tackling climate change in housing saves residents money, helps combat fuel poverty, boosts the economy and creates jobs. The Council and especially our partner Housing associations want to be at the forefront of this, but the sector is

facing a huge challenge: how to cut carbon emissions and tackle climate change whilst delivering a major programme of safety remediation work and building tens of thousands of new homes.

It is the Council's intention to undertake a Climate Change/Carbon assessment on all Council schemes to ensure where possible we are developing to the highest environmental standards possible

d) Equality and Diversity

A full equalities impact assessment has been undertaken in respect of the Ryedale Housing Strategy.

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Background Papers:

Appendix One- key achievements from the Housing Strategy 2015/21